

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 01511 110030Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /073 W
-----062653 110057Z /20

P R 102321Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9508
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GT
SUBJECT: FURTHER DELAY EXPECTED IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION RETURNS

REF: GUATEMALA 1500

1. ARTURO MALDONADO DE LA CERDA, HEAD OF THE ELECTORAL REGISTRY AND COUNCIL, REFUSED THIS MORNING (MARCH 10) TO FURNISH RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, HE NOTED THERE IS NO LAW REQUIRING THE COUNCIL TO GIVE PRELIMINARY DATA SINCE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FINAL VOTE COUNT FOR PRESIDENT BELONGED TO THE CONGRESS.

HE ISSUED A BULLETIN ALONG THE SAME LINES, WHICH WAS DESCRIBED BY THE PRESS AS A "WASHING OF THE HANDS". MUCH OF THE MEDIA (EVEN PARTS UNALIGNED WITH LUCAS) HAS THEREFORE RESORTED TO AN UNOFFICIAL COUNT DRAWN FROM INFORMATION FURNISHED UNOFFICIALLY BY THE GUATEMALA CITY ELECTORAL BOARD AND PREVIOUS NUMBERS PROVIDED BY THE

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PAGE 02 GUATEM 01511 110030Z

ELECTORAL COUNCIL. THIS COUNT HAS LUCAS COMFORTABLY IN FIRST PLACE BY 41,000 VOTES. TOTALS WHICH INCLUDE GUATEMALA CITY AND SUPPOSEDLY ALMOST ALL OF THE VOTE FROM THE REST OF THE COUNTRY ARE: LUCAS, 262,960 (40.3 PERCENT); PERALTA AZURDIA, 221,223 (33.9 PERCENT); AND PERALTA MENDEZ, 167,890 (25.7 PERCENT).

2. CONGRESS, WHICH MEETS TODAY TO START COUNTING THE VOTES, IS

EXPECTED TO DIVIDE INTO COMMITTEES WITH PARTY REPRESENTATIVES ON EACH COMMITTEE. COMPLAINTS WILL BE DULY NOTED AND FORWARDED WITH EACH COMMITTEE'S VOTE COUNT TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE (COMITE DIRECTIVA) OF CONGRESS. THE LATTER COMMITTEE (MADE UP OF ONE PID MEMBER, ONE PR, ONE MLN, TWO CAO (ARANA), AND TWO "INDEPENDENTS") WILL RESOLVE THE COMPLAINTS AND PRESENT THE FINAL TALLY TO THE FULL CONGRESS FOR DECISION BETWEEN THE TWO LEADING CANDIDATES.

3. THE MLN IS PLANNING A MAJOR DOWNTOWN RALLY FOR NOON SATURDAY.

4. COMMENT: AN MLN OFFICIAL MARCH 10 GAVE US A TABULATION OF THE FINAL VOTE AS DETERMINED ACTAS RECEIVED FROM MLN ELECTORAL DELEGATES ON ELECTION DAY. PERALTA AZURDIA HAS 228,368 VOTES (36.7 PERCENT) ACCORDING TO THIS TABLE: LUCAS, 220,144 (35.5 PERCENT; AND PERALTA MENDEZ, 174,059 (28.0 PERCENT). THE OFFICIAL ESTIMATED THAT IT WOULD TAKE CONGRESS SEVERAL DAYS INCLUDING SATURDAY AND SUNDAY BEFORE THE FINAL RESULT COULD BE ANNOUNCED.

BOSTER

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